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used to be so much smaller. I guess I hate to see you grow up. When you're grown up, will we still be friends?" I say always. "But I feel so bad, Buddy. I wanted so bad to give you a bike. I tried to sell my cameo Papa gave me. Buddy, she hesitates, as though embarrassed, "—I made you another kite." Then I confess that I made her one, Goo; and we laugh. The candle burns too short to hold. Out it goes, exposing the starlight, the stars spinning at the window like a visible caroling that alowly, slowly daybreak silences. Possibly we doze; but the beginnings of dawn splash us like cold water: we're up, wide-eyed and wandering while we wait for others to waken. Quite deliberately my friend drops a kettle on the kitchen floor. I tap-dance in front of closed doors. One by one the household emerges, looking as though they'd like to kill us both; but it's Christmas, so they can't. First, a gorgeous breakfast: just everything you can imagine — from flapjacks and fried squirrel to mointy grits and honey in-the-comb. Which puts everyone in a good humor except my friend and I. Frankly, we're so impatient to get at the presents we can't eat a mouthful.

Well, I'm disappointed withow wouldn't be? With socks, a Sunday school shirt, some bandkerchiefs, a hand-medown sweater and a year's subscription to a religious magazine for children. The Little Shepherd. It makes me boil. It really does.

My friend has a better haul. A sack of Satsumas, that's her best present. She is proudest, however, of a white wool shawl knitted by her married sister. But she says her favorite gift is the kite I built her. And it is very beautiful; though not as beautiful as the one she made me, which is blowing, and nothing will do till we've run to a pasture below the house where Queenie bas socoted to bury her bone (and where, a winter hence, Queenie will be buried tool). Their, plunging through the healthy waist-field press, we unreel our kites, feel them twitching at the string like sky fish as they swim into the wind. Satsumas and wateb our kites

he Baptist window: pretty as colored glass with the pouring through, such a shine you don't know it's ing dark. And it's been a comfort: to think of that le taking away all the spooky feeling. But I'll wager ever happens. I'll wager at the very end a body realthe. Lord has already shown himself. That things as a are," her hand circles in a gesture that gathers the brone, "just what they've always seen, was seehim. As for me, I could leave the world with today yeys."

It's esparates us. Those who Know Best decide that I mg in a military school. And so follows a miserable ression of bugle-blowing prisons, grim reveille-ridden mer camps. I have a new home, too. But it doesn't at. Home is where my friend is, and there I never go. and there she remains, puttering around the kitchen, ne with Queenie. Then alone. ("Buddy dear," she kiked Queenie bad. Be thankful she didn't feel h. I wrapped her in a Fine Linen sheet and rode her buggy down to Simpson's pasture where she can with all her Bones. ..."). For a few Novembers she in the story." But gradual: in her letters she waded in tollet paper: "See a picture show and the testory." But gradual: in her letters she didn't he lately says she stays in bed: a morning arrives in ember, a leafless birdless coming of winter morning, in she cannot rouse herself to exclaim: "Oh my, it's ceake weather!"

And when that happens, I know it. A message saying so merely confirms a piece of news some secret vein had already received, severing from me an irreplaceable part of myself, letting it loose like a kite on a broken string. That is why, walking across a school campus on this particular December morning, I keep searching the sky. As if I expected to see, rather like hearts, a lost pair of kites hurrying toward heaven.

A Christmas Memory

By Truman Capote

winter morning more than twenty years ago. Consider the kitchen of a spreading old house in a country town. A great black stove is its main feature; but there is also a big round table and a fireplace with two rocking chairs placed in front of it. Just today the fireplace commenced its seasonal roar.

A woman with shorn white bair is standing at the kitchen window. She is wearing tennis shoes and a shapeless gray sweater over a summery calico dress. She is small and sprightly, like a bantam ben; but, due to along youthful illness, her shoulders are pitfully bunched. Her face is remarkable — not unlike Lincoln's, craggy like that, and tinted by sun and wind; but it is delicate too, finely boned, and her eyes are sherry-colored and timed. "Ob, my," she exclaims, her breath smoking the windowpane, "it's fruitcake weather!"

The person to whom she is speaking is myself. I am seven; she is sixty-something. We are cousins, very distant ones, and we have lived together — well, as long as I can remember. Other people inhabit the bouse, relatives; and though they have power over us, and frequently make us cry, we are not, on the whole; too much aware of them. We are each other's best friend. She calls me Buddy, in memory of a boy who was formerly her best friend. The other Buddy died in the 1880's, when she was still a child. She is still a child. She is still a sounded so cold and clear. And there were no birds singing; they've gone to warmer country, yes indeed. Oh, Buddy, stop stuffing have from the window with a purposeful excitement in ber eyes. "The courhouse bell sounded so cold and or clear. And there were no birds singing; they've gone to warmer country, yes indeed. Oh, Buddy, stop stuffing them she was the river and my faceh on the strip of the distribution of the part and trop strip of the part and reverse in the strip of the part and trop strip of t

anything except funny papers and the Bible, worn cosmetics, cursed, wished someone barm, told a lie on pursose, let a hungry dog go hungry. Here are a few things she has done, does do: killed with a hoe the biggest rail-tlesnake ever seen in this county (sixteen raitles), dip snuff (secretly), tame hummingbirds (just try it) till they balance on ber finger, 'tell ghost stories (we both believe in ghosts) so tingling they bill you in July, talk to herself, take walks in the rain, grow the prettiest japonicas in town, know the recipe for every sort of old-time Indian cure, including a magical wart-remover. Now, with supper finished, we retite to the room in a scrap-quilf-covered iron bed painted rose pink, her favorite color. Sliently, wallowing in the pleasures of conspiriolled and green as May buds. Somber fifty-cent pleces, heavy concupit to weight a dead man's eyes. Lovely dimes, the liveliest coin, the one that really jingles. Nickels and quarters, worn smooth as creek pebbles. But mostly a hateful heap of bitter-doored pennies. Last summer others in the house contracted to pay us a penny for every twenty-five flies we killed. Oh, the carrage of August: the flies that flew to beaven! Yet it was not work in which we took pride. And, as we sit counting pennies, it is as though we were back tabulating dead flies. Neither of us has a head for figures; we count slowly, lose track, start again. According to her calculations, we have \$12.73. According to her calculations, we have \$12.73. According to mine, exactly \$13. "I do hope you're wrony, Buddy. We can't mess around with threen the word, but the window.

Of the ingredients that go into our fruitcakes, whisky is the most expensive, as well as the hardest to obtain: it is as though we were back will fall. Or put somebody in the cemertry. Why, I wouldn't dream of getting out of bed on the threenth." This is true: she always spends thirteenths in bed. So, to be on the safe side, we subtract a condition of the bear of the providents that go into our fruitcakes, whi